



March 2, 2016

To: Sarah Mangelsdorf, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
From: Jocelyn Milner, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
Subject: Proposed Policy Guidelines for Named Options within Academic Majors

I am forwarding to you a policy on named options within the academic major for discussion and consideration for approval by the University Academic Planning Council (UAPC).

Why develop this policy? For many years, the University has had only minimal informal guidelines for named options. As named options have become more commonly used and used for more kinds of academic programs a fair amount of “case law” has accumulated. Increasingly, it would be useful to have set of proper policy guidelines for reference. To fill this void, we have developed a set of proposed guidelines. For the most part, the proposed guidelines simply document the advice and practice we have in place now for handling named option planning, approval and implementation.

Process for recording Honors designations. As it happens, our work on recording honors designations dovetails with this policy and so we have taken the opportunity to integrate these efforts. We in Academic Planning and Institutional Research (APIR) along with colleagues in the Office of the Registrar have developed recommendations for recording honors designations on the student record. This activity came out of a discussion at the April 2014 UAPC meeting on the topic of honors; after that discussion then-Provost Paul DeLuca directed our offices to partner on the development of recommendations to regularize the recording of Honors designations. The result of that work has been recommendations to use a sub-plan akin to a named option to record students in Honors programs. Additional details on recommendations for recording honors designations on the student record are in the attached memo.

Who developed and reviewed this policy? The proposed policy was developed by APIR in partnership with the Registrar’s Office and the Graduate School. We started circulating drafts in June 2015. In Fall 2015, we circulated drafts for review and comment to the University Council for Academic Affairs and Assessment (UCAAA), the Crossroads Committee, and Academic Advising and Policy Leaders (AAPL) Committee. Some of the UCAAA members shared the draft with their school/college academic planning councils and dean’s staff. We received a small number of minor comments, all of which have been incorporated into the document.

What about “tracks” and “honors”? The aspects of the proposed guidelines that have generated questions of substance are the phase-out of informal tracks as a sub-plan type in the student information system and the use of sub-plans to designate honors programs. We have responded to those questions directly in meetings with school/college colleagues and in a meeting with AAPL.

Page 1 of 2

On January 11, 2016 we circulated a final version of the policy to all of the academic deans and invited any remaining comment or feedback (by February 26, 2016). As of March 2, 2016 we had received a few minor comments and formal endorsements from some schools/colleges.

At this time, I think the policy is ready for discussion at the March 17, 2016 UAPC meeting and consideration for approval at the April 21, 2016 UAPC meeting.

I look forward to advancing this policy for discussion and approval.

Many thanks.

Attachments

- A. Policy Guidelines for Named Options within Academic Majors
- B. Recommendations for Recording Honors Designations on the Student Record

Copies:

University Academic Planning Council
Sarah Kuba, Academic Planning and Institutional Research
Michelle Young, Academic Planning and Institutional Research
Scott Owczarek, University Registrar
Beth Warner, Associate Registrar
Marty Gustafson, Assistant Dean, Graduate School
Jennifer Martin, Academic Planning Specialist, Graduate School